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832 hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhoroia*
735 will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ;
783 or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.
584 This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease ; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination ola, ula, ulula in these verbs ; it means generally to undo, to take away).

832 If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry
754 boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or
262 perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (Buta).

584 When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

583 1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

535/578 immediately after his arrival, goes to the husband and to his assembled relatives and tells them roughly: "Here we are; we bring you your dog. Here it is. With us, she was reputed to be a good girl. Now we shall hear you every day say that she is lazy, does not know how to cook, has a host of lovers... All right! Kill her! Kill your dog! Have you not bought it? She is a witch! Let her drink the magic philter, etc." The men keep silent... "Yes, you are right. We shall beat her. But if her husband is too hard on her, we shall try to deliver her. We shall do our best to protect her".

In the meantime the women cut the logs of the *shigiyane*, and fill the pots with water, and the feast goes on, another ox having been killed by the husband. The married pair sit on a mat and the women of the two families begin the mutual exchange of insults which are never wanting on this day! "You dogs!" one of the aunts of the girl will say, "people of no consequence! You have not even a broken pot to remove the ashes from the fireplace. You can congratulate yourselves on getting such a good wife as this, a hard worker, a splendid cook, a nice and honest girl." An old woman of the other party answers: "Yes! If you have exhorted her sufficiently! Perhaps she will give up her bad ways, her laziness, etc..."—"Bad ways? You may well speak of that! Look at your son! What was he? A wild beast! We have come to cut off his tail and make a man of him!"

V. *Marriage by abduction.*

588/383 The usual ceremonies which we have described belong to the legal marriage (ku teka, ku lobola). But there exists another way of getting a wife, and the poor (psisiwana), those who have no oxen, no pounds sterling for lobola, especially if they have no energy, have recourse to this method. It is called *ku tlhuba*. A young man in such a position, wishing to marry such and such a girl, will send a friend to her and propose a rendez-vous in the

588 bush. If she agrees to become his wife in this irregular manner,
583 she goes there and meets him. They have relations together and run to one of the relatives of the girl's mother. The family of the mother will be more lenient than the family of the father, having no right to the lobolo. The transgressors of the law will probably choose the village of the maternal uncle and settle there. The parents look everywhere for their daughter and try to get her to return home. If she is quite determined to remain with her ravisher, they let her go free, deploring their misfortune and their shame. But it is rare in the primitive state of the tribe for such a marriage not to be regularised. The thief, if he has retained any feeling of decency, will try to collect the lobolo. One morning he goes to the village of his wife's parents, and deposits a sovereign or a goat or a cock on the threshold of the hut of the girl's mother ; or he hangs a half-sovereign on the goat's neck, rubs its lips with salt to prevent it from bleating, and then shouts loudly : " We have stolen, we of such and such a clan "... People wake from their sleep, not knowing what animal has made such a noise, come out of their huts and see the culprit standing outside the fence. When he has been duly recognised, he runs away. He will perhaps bring some other presents till he has definitely
588 " lobola " his wife. This is called the *nshonshonela*. Should he
611 not succeed in bringing the regular payment, the first girl born
597 of that marriage will be the lobolo. " Nwana a ta lobola mamana wa kwe " : the child will pay for her mother. In law, all the children of such a union belong to the girl's family : a man who has not lobola has no right of property in his children. (See Part III.)

Should the woman who has been stolen by *tlhuba* go at once to live with her irregular husband in his village, her parents will arrange matters in another way. They will " go as enemies " (hi bulala), make a regular descent on the village of the thief, kill a pig, threaten to take all the furniture. The men of that village will then intercede and, in the course of time, the lobolo will be paid. (See App. VIII.)

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SOME REMARKS ON THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE THONGAS

583 Though somewhat different in the various clans, the marriage customs show a strong resemblance in them all and differ only in details. There are three great "moments" to be distinguished in the sequence of the rites: 1) the *buta*, betrothal, with the two official visits of the fiancé and the fiancée. 2) The *lobola*, remittance of the purchase money on which the two families have agreed and 3) the *hloma*, the ceremony of taking the bride to her husband's home. Some of the customs accompanying these principal acts are very strange and seem at first quite incomprehensible.

1) To understand them, we must observe that marriage in primitive or semi-civilised tribes is not an individual affair as it has become with us. It is an affair of the community. It is a kind of contract between two groups, the husband's family and the wife's family. What is the respective position of the two groups or families ? One of the groups loses a member, the other gains one. To save itself from undue diminution, the first group claims compensation, and the second grants it under the form of the lobolo. This remittance of money, oxen or hoes, will allow the first group to acquire a new member in place of the one lost, and so the balance will be kept. This conception of the lobola as a compensation, a means of restoring the equilibrium between the two groups, is certainly the right one.

This need of maintaining the importance of a group, the tendency to resist a lessening of that group, accounts also for some of the other customs ; all the rites which emphasise the value of the bride find their explanation there. "A hi si kola ha yene", "we are not tired of her, we would gladly keep her", say her parents by means of these rites. The reciprocal insults which take place on the day of the hloma have the same origin. The relatives of the bride do their best to show the immense superiority of their own family over the other and of their daughter over her husband. The second group defends itself as well as it can ; hence the challenges which sometimes end in a real fight.

The sham fight is probably to be explained in the same way. The boys, the brothers of the bride, soundly thrash the brothers of the husband who dare to come and take away one of the girls of the kraal. They do not like to see their family impoverished, diminished. The

583 old men carry the hoes and show them to the defenders of the kraal saying: "This is our ox!" Or they hide themselves amidst the cattle as claiming their protection, because this is certainly the only condition upon which the bride's clan would consent to receive the invaders. Mr. van Gennep is right, I think, in rejecting the old explanation of the sham fight as being a remnant of the marriage by capture, which would have been the primitive form of marriage amongst these tribes. The Thongas possess the marriage by abduction, but this is quite another thing, as we have seen.

583 591 178 2) But it is probable that some of the rites of the Thonga marriage must be explained by an older form of marriage. The Rev. W. C. Willoughby in this book on *Race Problems in the New Africa* calls the type of marriage which we have described, and which is met with in all the South African tribes, *marriage of dominion*. The system of family life which results from the marriage of dominion is patrilineal:— children will trace their descent through their father and inherit his property,— patrilocal—the mother lives in the village of the father— patripotestal—the father possesses the children and has full power over them. But in other Bantu tribes, especially in Central Africa, the system is different. There we meet with what the same author calls the *matrilineal theory of marriage*. This system is matrilocal—the wife remains in the village of her group; matrilineal—children trace their descent through their female ancestors; avunculipotestal—the mother's brother has power over them, not the father. They belong to the mother's group and inherit its property. Under this system, the hloma, viz. the third "moment" of the marriage of dominion, does not take place, and the lobola, the bride-price, is not so important. The husband is only a lodger or a frequent visitor in his wife's village: he is a mere begetter of other people's children, and pays for this privilege by working for his wife's group or occasionally presenting it with gifts.

It is probable that this matrilineal theory of marriage is the older and that it has developed, under various influences, into the marriage of dominion. Mr. Willoughby supposes that men having captured women in raids and brought them to their homes found that system more convenient for them, and wished to possess their regular wives in the same manner. Change in the economic conditions must have had the same result. When, owing to a more settled way of living, property increased and cattle became plentiful, it is easy to conceive that the men of the husband's group made a kind of social contract with the men of

583 the wife's group, offering a higher bride-price in order to obtain the
591 transfer of the bride to her suitor's home.

178 Now, if this is the history of the evolution of the Bantu marriage (and we shall see later on, in studying the relation of the uterine nephew with his mother's brother, that it is quite probable that it is), we may find, in comparing these two forms of marriage, the explanation of some of the Thonga rites. The position of the wife was certainly much more satisfactory, from her point of view, under the old system. She could remain with her people and her husband had but little power over her, whilst, in the marriage of dominion, she must stay in the village of another group, work for it, and perhaps be ill-treated. Does this fact not account for her flight to the bush or to another village the day before hloma, when the female relatives of the husband go and seize her by force ? She tries to hide herself under a veil, as if she wished not to be recognised; but the husband's aunts remorselessly take it from her, and as she goes to the conjugal dwelling, her friends accompany her, singing songs of mourning. These rites are certainly more readily explained if there was, in a remote past, entirely forgotten by individuals, yet still influencing the mind of the community, another state of things, when the married woman was much freer and more happy.

585 3) We find the explanation of some other ceremonies when we apply to them the theory of the *Rites of passage*. For both bridegroom and bride, there is in fact passage to a new condition of life. They pass from the position of single to that of married persons. Hence the part taken by their best friends and by the bridesmaids, from whom they are separated by their marriage. For the bride there is passage from one family to another, from one village to another.

I cannot say that I have found distinct *separation* and *marginal* rites, but aggregation rites are numerous. The *aggregation rites* are first of all the common participation in the flesh of the oxen during the feasts. Nothing makes Natives more friendly towards each other than to eat meat together. Then come the building of the wood pile, the girl's acts of civility to the husband's friends during the *tjekela* and the day after the *hloma*. These rites being collective seem to represent the union of the two families. The new wife performs them herself individually during the first week of her marriage.

584 How is it possible to explain the calculated resistance to acts of politeness on the part of both male and female visitors during the betrothal ceremonies, and even later on ? If the girls alone made a difficulty about entering the village, the hut, and sitting down on the

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561 a rite of passage and this is also proved by the fact that the money or the
431 bracelets given to the persons concerned do not remain their property. As regards the circumcised, they remit them to the chief, and the chief distributes them to the old women who are no longer able to bear children. The girl who has passed through the khomba gives them to her adopted mother, who will use them in the same way. All the money remitted to the bride will go to the master of the village, for the old women and the children. *Married people must have no share in it,* as these presents are taboo. Why ? Because they are connected with a passage, and people who have sexual relations are considered as increasing the dangers connected with these critical phases of human development, when the heart is troubled by a half-conscious fear of a new and unknown future. Amongst civilised people who have reached the era of individualism, these fears find their expression in songs and poetry. In the communistic society they express themselves by means of rites.

* * *

561 Here are some answers to the questions of Professor Frazer on
387 marriage.

611 A man always brings his wife to his own home. This is the *tlhoma,* and it is a law. It is taboo for him to go and live with his parents-in- law, at any rate when he marries his first wife. In the course of time, when the children have grown up, when the *bukoñwana,* viz. the relations with parents-in-law, are of old standing, a man can go and live in his wife's village (See Part II). Another case in which this can be done is when a widow refuses to marry the man who legally inherits her, and gives herself to a stranger, a man of Inhambane, for instance. He does not pay the lobolo, and lives with her in her village ; but the children born of that union will belong to the family of the deceased husband.

585 There is no preparation for marriage amongst the Thongas by fasting, bleeding or keeping awake the night before. No corn or rice is thrown at the bridal pair. The bride or bridegroom is never represented at the marriage by a proxy or dummy. Conjugal relations begin immediately after marriage (see page 113), but the wife does not possess her home and her kitchen for the first year ; during that period she must cook for her mother-in-law.

583 There are no occasions on which men exchange their wives.

See practical conclusions on Marriage Rites at the end of Vol. I.

(see page 48.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk ; when her mother sends her on an errand she is able to do it. She also begins to talk, and to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she may eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home.

"When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with the shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back, she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood ; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles.

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It may however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies, neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are grown up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer ; she prepares the light beer ; she smears the floor of her hut ; this is what she does till she is quite old.

"When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grandchildren are

1 [The following page is quoted from an essay by a native girl at the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques -- Analyst.]

says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi." — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

III. *Matriarchy.*

178 602 But as regards *mother-right* and the *uterine family*, I must confess that I have altered my views since writing Les Ba-Ronga, and would testify my gratitude to Mr. S. Hartland, who encouraged me to study this subject more attentively. I had not then gathered all the facts, and the identity of the *ntukulu* and the *mupsyana* only became clearly apparent to me when studying the Northern clans. Now, having inquired with special care into this most curious feature of the Thonga system, I have come to the conclusion that the most probable explanation is that, in former and very remote times, our tribe passed through the matriarchal stage. Let us carefully consider the relation of a malume with his uterine nephews, recapitulating all the facts.

1) Duties and rights of the maternal uncle.

604 341 As we have seen, the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle : if he is a first-born child, the malume prepares his ntehe. (See page 46.) When weaned, he goes to stay in the village of his mother's relatives for many years, a girl sometimes till she is grown up. 604 Later on, when she marries, the maternal uncle claims a right 583 called *tjhumba*, £ 1, on the total amount of the lobolo. It is taboo to refuse it ; should a father dare to keep that £ 1, his brothers will say to him : "Do you not fear the gods ? The mother's gods will kill you! Your daughter will have no children. Did you alone bring her into the world ? Did not these people help you in bringing her forth ? And has not your wife grown with the assistance of those gods ? Her brother must be allowed to have his *tjhumba*" (Mboza).

585 604 On the day of the remittance of the lobolo, the maternal uncle and all the mother's relatives are invited to the feast, and for them a special part of the festal ox is reserved, called *nyimba*, viz. the

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E. THE LOBOLA CUSTOM.

1. *The History of the Custom. How it is practised.*

436 583 439 As far back as Natives can remember, lobola has always been practised. First it consisted of *mats* and *baskets*, in those remote times when white people had not yet made their appearance. *Large iron rings* were procured by barter from sailors who anchored off the shore (see Part IV), and were employed for the purpose. Later on white traders settled in the country. *Beads* were bought from them (nkarara), especially large ones (mubatlwana). A chief used to lobola with ten handfuls of these, a subject with only five. Large *brass rings* were also used in old times. Two of them have been found lately in the Maputju country, and one came into my possession. It weighs more than two pounds. They were called *litlatla* and were very much sought after. One was enough to buy a wife.

436 583 *Oxen* have also been used for a very long time for lobola. Some say that they were the regular means of getting a wife in the 18th century. When Manukosi came, in 1820, he appropriated all the cattle, and the Thongas were obliged to use beads and hoes for that reason. At any rate the Nkunas, when they emigrated into the Transvaal in 1835, were paying lobolo in oxen. A father claimed ten for his daughter. The Pedis of the country claimed only two or three, and this was one of the reasons why 436 the two tribes did not intermarry. Strange to say, I never heard 583 goats mentioned as having served for this purpose, though the 231 goat is certainly the oldest domestic animal of the South African Bantus! Whatever may have been the objects first used, sooner or later oxen, live stock, became the usual means of lobola. This appears plainly in the technical expressions : to go out with a herd (ntlhambi), viz., to go to lobola,—to eat the oxen, viz., to accept a lobolo,—the woman of my oxen, viz., the one bought with the oxen given by me for my wife, etc.

231 436 583 177 The scarcity of oxen, probably caused by the wars with the Zulus, was no doubt the reason why they were replaced by hoes. *Hoes* were universally employed from 1840-1870, together with oxen, when available. Ten was the regular price for lobola. Later on fathers asked twenty, thirty, fifty. They were first of native make ; the Vendas of Spelonken, near the Iron Mountain, provided the whole tribe for a time with that heavy currency, until the Europeans saw that there was good business to be done by supplying them. (See Part IV). Portuguese traders of Delagoa Bay began to send Natives to Gaza with guns and powder to hunt elephants, and paid them in hoes : twenty, fifty, one hundred hoes for a tusk, according to its size.

436 177 583 464 But hoes have also been superseded by the universal power of the *pound sterling*. After the death of Manukosi (1858), early in the sixties of the last century, some Zulus came to Delagoa Bay from Natal, sent by Englishmen to hunt elephants in Gaza. They told the people of the country that money could be obtained in Pietermaritzburg (Umgundhlovo) by working, and the first Ba-Ronga went *ku berengen*, viz., to serve white people there. In 1870, in the year still called Daiman by the chroniclers of the tribe, many more went to Kimberley, especially from the Transvaal colonies of Thongas, and gold coin began to spread amongst the tribe with all its usefulness and all its dangers. It is now becoming more and more current, as from 50,000 to 70,000 Natives of the Thonga tribe are working in the Johannesburg mines. First of all £ 1 was worth ten hoes, and the lobolo money was fixed at £ 8 by the chiefs. But this price was soon considered insufficient by the parents. They wanted £ 10.10.0, ten guineas! They had already learned that, amongst cultivated people and in refined transactions, we talk of guineas and not of pounds! Later on it rose as high as £ 20 for an ordinary girl, £ 30 for a chief's daughter. The average round Lourenço Marques was £ 18 at the beginning of this century and in the Transvaal £ 25 (1). When a

436 177 583

(1) There is a tendancy constantly to increase the amount of the lobolo. Nowadays it is nearer £ 30 than £ 20. In this connection I may mention the following fact. A man named Mpunzi had payed £ 28 for his wife, and the matter was looked on as concluded ; but later on his parents-in-law came to claim £ 2 more. Why? They had purchased a wife for their son and had obtained her for £ 28 ; it was all right so

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583
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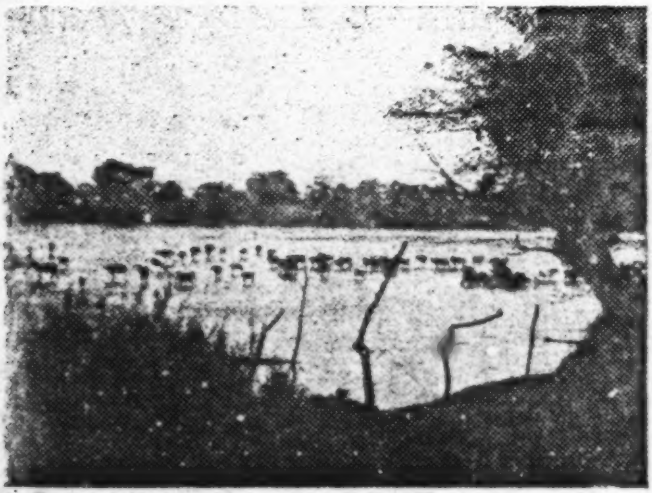
when a

Banyan takes a native wife (or rather a concubine), he can get her for £ 10, and the father consents to this lower price, first because a "white man's" wife is better treated and fed than ordinary native women, and secondly because the Banyan will soon go home, to India, and this kind of marriage is tacitly looked upon as temporary. The influx of money had also the following unexpect-



Cattle in the Nhomati River near Antioka.

ed effect on the native custom. There are two kinds of lobolo: 1) the lobolo which a boy obtains from his sister's marriage, and which he employs with the consent of the family to buy a wife for himself; this is the true old-fashioned way for him to contract a marriage; 2) the acquired lobolo won by a boy who has worked for it, and who has *started a herd for himself* (tisungulela ntlhambi). This second kind of lobolo became much easier to procure under

far. But the people who had given their daughter for that sum wanted to lobola a girl and were asked £ 30. Therefore they claimed £ 2 from the bakoïwana of Mpunzi and these, in their turn, came to him asking for £ 2 more. And it was so arranged. This story fittingly illustrates the explanation of the lobolo which I set forth below: it is a compensation.

583/177 the new conditions, especially when a stay of a year or two in Johannesburg was long enough to save the necessary sum. Boys who had no sister, and who would have been destitute in former times, could then dream of a *tshenwge* viz., of marrying three or four wives! And they had this advantage that, their wives not having been bought with family property (their sister's oxen), no bakoñwana could disturb them in their domestic happiness, as may happen to those who marry by means of the first-mentioned lobolo.

This leads us to consider :

583 ## II. *The original meaning and the consequences of the lobola.*

As we have said previously, the only way of understanding the lobola, as well as other similar payments in kind which we meet with amongst a great number of uncivilized or half civilized nations, (1) is to consider it as *a compensation given by one group to another group*, in order to restore the equilibrium between the various collective units composing the clan. The first group acquires a new member : the second feels itself diminished, and claims something which permits it to reconstitute itself, in its turn, by the acquisition of another woman. This collectivist conception alone explains all the facts.

583/562/593/618 In this way, the acquired wife, though she keeps her shibongo (clan name), becomes the property of the first group. She is aggregated to it by complicated marriage ceremonies, representing the passage from one family to another. She is owned by the new family, herself and the children who will be born of her. She is not in any way a slave, but she is nevertheless owned. She is not the individual property of one man, but the collective property of a group. Hence the following facts :

1) Her whole family take part in the marriage ceremonies, especially on the day when the lobola is brought by the bridegroom

(1) See A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage*, p. 170. The *Kalym* of the Turko-Mongolians, the *Nyen* of Southern Thibet, etc., correspond to the Bantu lobola.

583 (See page 109). Every male member of the group has his say in
835 the matter.

593 2) Brothers will always be ready to help a poor relative to
618 lobola : they work for their group.

3) The acquired wife is their presumptive spouse, though they cannot have sexual relations with her (matlulana). They will inherit her if the husband dies, according to the laws which I have explained in the preceding paragraphs.

583 4) Children will belong to the father, live with him, bear his
593 shibongo (family name), and owe him obedience : boys will
611 strengthen this group, girls will be lobota (factitive of lobola—
618 sold in marriage) for his profit. Father-right rests on the lobola. This is so plain that any child born of a woman who has not been paid for belongs to the mother's family, bears her shibongo name and will live in the malume's village. In Appendix VII, I relate the story of Spoon Libombo as an instance of this primordial law. This is the reason why, when the question is discussed, men insist so much on the preservation of the lobola. They say : "Who will guarantee us the possession of our children if lobola is suppressed ?"

So the lobola is by no means a purchase made by the husband, and still less a present given to the wife's parents.

1) Advantages of the lobola custom.

583 In the primitive collective stage of society the custom has
593 certainly *great advantages* : 1) It strengthens the family, I mean
586 the patriarchal family, the right of the father. 2) It marks the difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate marriage and, in this sense, takes the place of an official marriage register. 3) It puts hindrances in the way of dissolving the matrimonial union, as a wife cannot definitely leave her husband without her group returning the lobola. Therefore it obliges the married pair to have a certain regard one for the other.

However, these advantages must not be exaggerated. Marriages

583 586 562 593 concluded on the lobola basis, are frequently dissolved (1). The tie being purely material, it is easy to sever it. When the husband "bitana tihomu," claims his oxen, who could refuse to return them ? It is certainly erroneous to say that the lobola is a contract made between two families in order to guarantee the good treatment of the wife by her husband and vice versa, to prevent the husband beating his wife or the wife deserting the conjugal home from mere caprice. It has even been asserted that this sum of money was a pledge, a security, claimed by the wife's parents for the protection of their daughter! There is nothing of the kind in this institution. The exhortations addressed to the bride on the day of her *hloma* (page 118) prove clearly enough that, on the contrary, owing to the lobola, the husband has every right over her, and that she has no right to protest if he uses or abuses this right.

2) Bad consequences of the lobola custom.

583 562 1) And this is the first *regrettable consequence of the lobolo* : the woman is undoubtedly reduced to an *inferior position* by the fact that she has been lobola. *a)* This appears clearly in the fact that, though she is not looked upon exactly as a head of cattle, a marriageable girl is in principle entirely at the mercy of her family as regards the choice of her husband. In the same way a widow to be inherited is in the hands of her deceased husband's family.

586 548 (1) I will give only one example which I witnessed amongst my neighbours and which shows that, with women of loose character, at any rate, the payment of lobolo helps very little to strengthen the matrimonial tie. A girl named Hlapfuta, daughter of Bandi, married a first husband. The "bukosi" (name commonly given to the lobolo money) was used to procure a wife for her brother. But she left her husband and was married by Nwamusi. This second husband paid the lobolo, which was then returned to the first. But Hlapfuta ran away a second time and joined a man called Matshubele. She did the same thing five consecutive times, and finally she moved to Majlangalen, to the suburbs of Lourenzo Marques, the favourite quarter of the prostitutes. There she was lost, and the "bukosi" also. Her paternal uncle, who had been put to any amount of trouble to recover the "bukosi" in order to give it back to the five abandoned husbands, seeing that it would be impossible to satisfy the last, could no longer bear the strain and committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree not far from my house in Rikatla. The debt remained with the girl's brother who "had eaten the bukosi."

583 Men are often better than their principles, and we have seen in
562 the study of marriage and inheritance customs that the consent
593 of a girl, and of a widow, is generally asked before any decision takes place. This is done as long as the male masters of the woman have no special interest in the choice. But should they have reason to impose a certain husband upon her, they will not hesitate to force her to accept him ; a young girl will be given up to a dirty old man, for whom she has no liking, on account of a lobola debt of twenty years standing! The lobola hardens the heart and the woman is unable to defend herself. She can always run away. But where will she hide, if all her relatives agree on her being sacrificed to the interest of the family ? Or she can threaten to commit suicide, and she occasionally does so. *b)* She must work for her husband, who gives her very little in return. It is true that she is not a *slave*. She is however *owned*. *c)* This is partly the cause of the shocking difference established between a husband and his wife. The married woman is henceforth absolutely prohibited from adulterous relations — which is a very admirable provision — but her husband is quite free in this respect : he has not been bought.
593 *d)* As regards her children, whatever may be her love for them,
562 she does not in fact possess them. They belong to the father.
586 If divorce takes place and the lobolo is not returned to the husband, he keeps them and the mother will be separated from them for ever (1).

583 2) A second series of consequences arising from this custom
606 are the *strained relations* between the two contracting groups.
578 We have sufficiently insisted on this subject. What makes dealings with parents-in-law so difficult ? It is the lobolo, the sum of money which has perhaps not been Fully paid, and

(1) The Rev. H. Dieterlen, of Basutoland, in a paper on the lobola, wrote the following words, which apply to the Thongas as well as to the Ba-Sutho : "A woman married under lobola bears children but possesses none. The children belong to those who gave the cattle. Whatever may be her own merits, she can see her children pass into the hands of the rawest heathen and be given over to the cupidity of rapacious and rascally relatives. She can be illtreated, driven away, abandoned, repudiated : she will have to live without children ; she will resemble a woman who has never had any. She is not supposed to have the heart and the feelings of a mother. And her children are treated as if they had no filial affection."

583 606 586 578 the debt remains as a permanent cause of irritation. If there is no reason for friction on that point, the threat of quarrels ending in divorce is always impending like the sword of Damocles. If this takes place, the sad event will be made ten times more painful by the terrible dispute which will arise by reason of the lobola being claimed back. And the contending couple will not suffer alone. It may be that another marriage, that of the great mukonwana, which was perhaps a happy one, will be destroyed in consequence of the divorce. (p. 243) "A ba ruli timbilwin," remarked Mboza. "They don't find peace in their hearts."

These complicated relations due to the lobola poison the whole of native life. Life should be easy for South African Natives. Their wants are few and they have enough to satisfy them under their invariably blue sky. They are generally speaking mild and good-natured. But the lobola question fills the African village with hatred and bitterness. *The milandju*, the debts! Milandju comes from landja, to follow, and this etymology is very instructive. A husband whose wife has gone away must *landja* his wife or rather his money. His whole family will help him in following this property until it has been recovered. Natives will go from one end of the country to the other to follow a few pounds, and at least three quarters of the cases which are brought before the Courts are lobola cases.

As regards the attitude to be adopted towards the Lobola custom, see Practical Conclusions. III.

F. POLYGAMY.

I. *Origin and spread of Polygamy amongst the Thongas.*

595 Polygamy is uniformly practised all through the tribe. This is not to say that every man has many wives; the automatic rule, by which the number of males is always about equivalent to

202 will at once go and undo the trap which is on their side ; in the
726 morning, the people of Nondwane will know that they must also fly.

D. THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CHIEF.

642 In the Thonga Court there is no separation of powers. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers are all in the hands of the chief, aided by his counsellors. The chief is the supreme authority and his decisions are without appeal.

I. *Legislative affairs.*

671 The *chief* makes the laws (p. 382) and presides at discussions
643 which end in a resolution. But his counsellors assist him.
583 Here is an example of such a decision taken at Maphunga's court. There was no uniformity as to the money to be paid for a lobolo, and some fathers claimed as much as £ 20 or £ 30 for their daughters. The great counsellors of the capital decided (tjimba mhaka, viz., to tie the matter) that a lobolo should be £ 15.10 as the maximum. They "tied the matter" with the assent of the chief. Then all the sub-chiefs and counsellors were summoned to the capital. The chief called the roll to ascertain if they were all present. The great counsellor then said to the assembly : "The herds which people claim are too large. Have you gold mines and do you know how to make coins ? Henceforth do not lobola with too much money. £ 15.10 is quite enough!" Every sub-chief, on his return home, called his men and informed them of the decision : "Hi to timhaka! Such are the matters!" said they. The subjects were disappointed. They wept! But they had to accept the decision. To oppose it is taboo! "Psa yila!"

643 A *native debate* or discussion is conducted on very different
645 lines from those to which we are generally accustomed, nothing
671 ever being put to the vote. The chief presides. A proposition is

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587 the chief of our Mazwaya family, Magomanyama, says that no claim is accepted for a leper, for one drowned in the river, or for anyone who dies from smallpox or from the assagay."

692 177 Of course the Ngwetsa did not accept such an answer, but this is a typical Bantu affair (nandju), showing the many blessings of the lobola custom. The matter will have to be decided by the chief, or rather by the Portuguese Administrator, who must take a good deal of trouble, if he wishes to understand it rightly and to deliver an equitable judgment!

APPENDIX IX (See p. 530).

The story of Mboza and Muhambi and of the women inherited by them, illustrating the consequences of lobola and of its suppression.

177 Compare the genealogy of the Masuluke family (page 225).

545 383 Mboza had four brothers, three elder and a younger: Sam, the elder, had a son, Hlangabeza, who married by lobola a first wife and by abduction a second, Bukutje II. Fos, the second brother, married Bukutje I and had four children: three girls, Tshakaza, Estelle, Nhwanin, and one boy, Muhambi. Sam and Fos both died, so Bukutje I was inherited by Mboza and her four children went to live in his village. In the meantime Mboza became a Christian, as also did Muhambi and the three girls. Wishing to lead a Christian life, he separated from Bukutje I, who, being still a heathen, committed herself with "an empty oil-tin" (p. 213), viz., a man of Inhambane who became her servant-husband. In 1904 a Christian young man, Moses, wooed the elder of the three girls and brought £ 20 to lobola her. This money was naturally due to Muhambi in order to allow him to lobola a wife for himself, and indeed Muhambi was betrothed to Ntshelebeti, daughter of Phulan Ngwetsa. This man was still a heathen and consequently wished his daughter to be paid for.

Having been told that it is not right for a Christian to accept lobolo money, Mboza and Muhambi, actuated by a most praiseworthy scruple, decided to return the money to Moses, and Muhambi started for Johannesburg in order to earn the lobolo due to Phulan. But this was not the end of this famous "bukosi!" The younger brother, Komatan, a consistent heathen, came to Mboza, very angry with him for his

[See pp. 504-509 -- Analyst]

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foolishness. "This is family property," said he, "and I do not consent to its being lost." So he claimed the £ 20, which was given to him, and out of which Mboza did not get a penny. Komatan himself did not intend to use it for his own benefit, as we shall see presently.

The following year, whilst Muhambi was still working in Johannesburg, Hlangabeza died. Muhambi was his heir, being his *makwabu*, first cousin on the paternal side. He was informed of his good luck, but answered that it was taboo for him (yila), as a Christian, to accept this inheritance. So Komatan took the first of Hlangabeza's wives, not as a wife, however, but because she had children and he wanted them to remain in the Masuluke family. The woman herself also took "an empty oil-tin," in the form of another Inhambane man. The second of Hlangabeza's wives, having been married by him by abduction, was not really the property of the Masulukes. But she had one child; so Komatan took the lobolo money of Moses and remitted it to Denisa, this woman's father, and, in this way, he secured the property of both mother and child to the Masulukes. The woman, however, went to live with a Chopi in an irregular manner and had a second child by him. On January 29th, 1909, this woman of the Denisa family came to Muhambi. Her child had to be weaned, which is done by means of a rite in which the husband must take part. She had no true husband, so she vented all her anger before Mboza and Muhambi saying: "I have no husband, nobody to give me clothing, to pay my hut-tax, to repair my house. Have you indeed forsaken me?" — "Yes" answered Muhambi, "you cannot be my wife. I have married Ntshelebeti and, for us Christians, it is not allowable to take many wives." — "Then do not be surprised if I go and take another husband, and do not go and accuse me *shikanekiswen*, before the Portuguese Administrator, saying I have spoilt your property." — "We shall not *follow* you," said Muhambi, "you are free." — "But" added Mboza, "we are not sending you to commit sin! Go and think the matter over."

This was the end of the discussion. Mboza's answer is no answer at all. It only shows the great complexity and difficulty of the position. The whole story fitly illustrates how utterly bad the custom of lobola is, and what immense difficulties its suppression entails. Let me, however, remark that these difficulties would not have arisen had there not been a heathen relative (Komatan) to uphold the claim which the Christians had foregone. During the stage of transition many hard cases such as this must unfortunately occur!

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000 The obligation however is not the same for both. A *civil Government*, undertaking to rule a tribe brought into subjection by war or placed under the Protectorate of a European power, dealing with Natives who still retain their primitive way of living, cannot pretend to govern them immediately according to the laws of civilised nations. This would be an impossibility. Such a Colonial Government must respect Native laws and judge cases in accordance with them, otherwise it would not appear to the Natives as just ; and it is indispensable that, in their dealings with uncivilised people, White Authorities should always satisfy this sense of justice, which is so strong amongst Natives. However, I do not think that this consideration ought to be pushed too far.

Native Commissioners are quite right when they aim at a progressive change in the laws and customs of primitive collectivist people in the direction of more individual liberty, so that the principles of Native society may be amended, and founded on the same basis as ours, in course of time. The State has no power to produce this evolution, but is must be favourable to it, and consider with sympathy every effort that is made to elevate and purify the social and family system of the tribe. It has many means at its disposal to collaborate in this work, as we shall very soon see.

177 583 The *Christian Missions* can alone bring about this transformation, acting, as they do, on the hearts of the Natives, producing individual conviction in the conscience, opening a new horizon to the mind, creating amongst them a new society. For them the duty of fighting lobola is absolute, and I cannot understand how some missionaries think it may be tolerated in a Christian Church. The following reasons ought to be taken into consideration by them, in addition to those already mentioned :

1. The lobola, being a material method of concluding a marriage, tends to degrade the moral foundation of a true Christian union, mutual love in particular. We know by experience that individual *love* of a young man for a young girl, love as we conceive it, which was scarcely to be met with in the original collective Bantu society, is beginning to appear amongst the best of our converts. This will become the true and powerful bond which will more effectually strengthen conjugal union amongst them.

2. Lobola is intimately connected with polygamy, as the woman bought belongs to the husband's family and must be inherited by his younger brothers. If this man is already married, he is bound to become a polygamist. So is the only brother of many girls, who is

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177 doomed by the custom to lobola for himself as many wives as the sisters
583 he possesses.

So all Missions working amongst the Natives practising the lobola, ought to agree upon a determined campaign against it, with those moral weapons which spiritual bodies ought alone to use. And I would recommend *the following rules* to be universally adopted :

1. *Lobota* (p. 101) should be prohibited, viz., no Christian father should be allowed to ask for a lobolo when giving his daughter in marriage. He is converted ; he calls himself a Christian ; he cannot be permitted a practice which is the negation of the moral character of the human being.

2. In the case of *widows*, let it be well understood that, in Christian communities, they are free as soon as their husband is dead ; that they keep their children and that, when they go home with them, no money can be claimed by the heirs, whether the woman has been paid for or not.

3. As regards *children*, the *moral right* of possession of both father and mother in regard to them should be maintained to the exclusion of a special right arising from the lobolo.

4. In the case of *a boy marrying the daughter of a heathen*, we cannot prevent him from paying a lobolo. The father is the master and, as we have no moral jurisdiction over him, we cannot oppose his claim. But, let it be well understood, that this payment will not give the new husband, who is a Christian, all the rights which accompany the lobolo under Native law. It would be wise to ask for a written stipulation from the husband in this case, as well as from the Christian father who gives his girl without lobolo. Let us be on our guard here! The lobolo being family property, if the father or the elder brothers, being Christians, do not claim it, another heathen relative will always appear on the scene and say : "If you do not want it, I claim it! The girl is *ours*!" I shall discuss this case later on.

5. When Christian girls, dependant upon a heathen father, wish to free themselves from the lobola, which appears to some of them as a degrading sale, they ought to be encouraged to savé money in order to redeem themselves. We have seen many cases in which this proof of energy given by girls has been a blessing for them and for the Church. The same applies to a young widow who wishes to lead a pure life and to avoid becoming the wife of a polygamist heir.

000 If all missionaries agreed on these points, the practice of lobola would soon disappear. But *the aid of the State*, which I think is desirable and quite legitimate, if it keeps within the limits of its proper

000 will lodge their claim for the sum which the man had generously foregone. For this reason we should recommend that a statement be drawn up in each case of renunciation of lobola. This paper could always be shown to anybody trying to interfere with a lawful marriage celebrated without lobola. In the same way the heathen heirs of a Christian husband who had paid a lobolo to his father-in-law, would be unable to lay claim to the widow.

Amongst Christian Natives a middle course has sometimes been adopted. The bridegroom gives the father of the bride a present which is called *tjakisa*, i.e. to make joyful. It consists generally of a certain number of pounds sterling, inferior to the number required by the customary bride-price. By this means the suitor "soothes the heart" of his father-in-law, who would find it too hard to give his daughter for nothing. What are we to think of this expedient? Nobody can prevent one man from making a present to another. As long as it is clearly understood that this tjakisa is not a lobolo, and that it does not carry with it the evil consequences of the heathen lobolo, it may be accepted as a kind of transitory measure. But there are dangers in the adoption of this custom. As the idea of lobolo is always more or less present in the mind of all, you will find the father-in-law coming from time to time to ask for some more pounds, a fact which shows that his heart has not been sufficiently soothed .. and bad feeling is sure to arise and disturb the relationship, so much so that the worried husband will say : "I had better have paid a full lobolo at once!" I do not think we can absolutely prohibit the tjakisa, but I consider it as a "pis-aller" and greatly prefer to see the father of a Christian girl courageously renounce his claim to any special present. Such cases are happily frequent in the Native Congregations.

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177 583 The eradication of the lobola will take long, but it must take place if Native society is to pass beyond the level of collective social life, and to be raised to the status of a civilised community. There will be a transition period during which both Natives and their civilisers will have to show much patience, tact and ability ; many hard cases will arise. The story of Fos and Mboza, which I narrate in Appendix IX, illustrates these difficulties. But, whatever they may be, the reform is worth every effort and I will borrow my conclusion from a Native whom I once heard speak with splendid clearness and conviction on the

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583 subject. This man, an evangelist called Zebedea, brought an old Native to me, named Tumben, a Christian who was still very much attached to heathen customs. They discussed before me this question : Must Tumben claim a lobolo owed to him, in order to pay a lobolo which he owes to somebody else ? The old man thought he was entitled to make his claim. Zebedea asserted that he was not, and the evangelist was right. Christian spirituality required of Tumben that he should renounce the lobolo because he was a convert ; on the other hand he could not decline to pay his lobola debt to his creditor who was a heathen, and could not consequently accept the Christian point of view. The case was hard for the old man and the fight between his conscience and his interest was sad to witness. Zebedea found convincing arguments : "These lobola debts," he said, "are ropes which start from the neck of one and go to the neck of the other. Though your father dies, this rope still ties you, you are kept tied to your father's bones by this accursed rope! Others will get drawn into its coils and the strands become entangled round you! Cut it and be free!"

IV. ON POLYGAMY (See p. 289).

000 Practically, what must be the attitude of the Government and of Missions towards this custom ?

1. As regards civilised Governments, having still to reckon with Native law, they cannot at once prohibit all forms of polygamy.

But when they have established marriage registration, it would seem that they ought not to allow unions posterior to the first to be considered as legitimate. These marriages ought not to be registered, and if this distinction were strictly enforced, by and by Natives would become more aware of the illegitimate character of polygamic marriages. In the Transvaal, the Native Affairs Department at one time tried to fight directly against the custom in the following manner. As every man has to pay taxes according to the number of his wives, the tax for the first wife was fixed at £ 2, and he had to pay double that sum for each extra wife. But the provision was abandoned later on. Taxation however, has everywhere the effect of limiting polygamy. In Portuguese territory, Natives are taxed according to the number of huts they possess. As each wife lives in a separate house, polygamists are more heavily taxed than others.

Enactments such as these are, I suppose, all that a Government can